United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1570
27 January 1994

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Commission of Inquiry into conduct of UNPROFOR personnel in former Yugoslavia finds no widespread or systematic illegal activity; independent investigation reveals individual cases of impropriety and illegality, leading to reprimands and dismissals.

+ Secretary-General, addressing Palestinian Rights Committee, highlights importance of its contribution to implementation of Israel/PLO accord; to appoint senior official to coordinate work of United Nations agencies assisting Palestinian people.

+ Ten MICIVIH observers return to Haiti to resume human rights work, beginning in Port-au-Prince, 20 more observers to arrive in coming days.

+ European Union, in letter to Security Council, expresses support for efforts of Co-Chairmen of International Conference on Former Yugoslavia to bring about negotiated settlement of Bosnian conflict.

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The Special Commission of Inquiry into allegations of misconduct against United Nations personnel in the former Yugoslavia found no evidence to confirm claims of widespread or systematic illegal activity, Yasushi Akashi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Chief of Mission of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), said today. However, the Commission's "independent and thorough" investigation had established some individual cases of impropriety and illegality, and a number of United Nations personnel had been reprimanded, repatriated or dismissed.

The Special Commission concluded that there had been some black-market trading in cigarettes, alcohol and coffee from the end of 1992 until early 1993, but found no evidence of organized, large-scale trafficking, according to Mr. Akashi. There was no basis for allegations that international staff from UNPROFOR were involved in illegal drug activity, although two local employees were dismissed for possession of illicit substances. Similarly,

(more)

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accusations that United Nations personnel smuggled people out of Sarajevo for financial gain, or were involved in illegal prostitution activities, were found to be baseless.

The Special Representative noted that UNPROFOR had taken steps to identify and halt illegal and improper activities before the Commission had begun its investigation. He stressed that the vast majority of UNPROFOR personnel were dedicated to their mission and were performing to a very high standard in difficult conditions, and that he was committed to upholding the integrity of the Force.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in an address today to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, highlighted the value of the Committee's contribution to the implementation of the self-government accord signed last year by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Speaking at the opening of the Committee's 1994 session, the Secretary-General also stressed its important role in mobilizing international support and assistance for the Palestinian people.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali said that he had decided to appoint a senior official, resident in the Middle East, to oversee the coordination of the work of the United Nations agencies assisting the Palestinian people. He said he had been asked by the General Assembly to take that action, and that such coordination was essential.

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Ten observers belonging to the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations returned yesterday to Port-au-Prince, and will resume their work to ensure respect for human rights, a United Nations spokesman said today. Twenty additional observers will arrive in the next few days.

MICIVIH's work will be limited initially to the Haitian capital, the spokesman noted. All the competent authorities have been informed of the movement of personnel.

Meanwhile, the Friends of the Secretary-General on the Question of Haiti met yesterday with Special Envoy Dante Caputo to begin work on a proposal relating to sanctions in light of the non-compliance with the Governors Island Agreement and the New York Pact. The Friends -- Canada, France, Venezuela and the United States -- will eventually submit their proposal to the Security Council.

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The European Union supports the efforts of the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia to bring about a negotiated peaceful settlement of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to a

letter to the Security Council, dated 25 January, signed by the Permanent Representatives of France, Spain and the United Kingdom to the United Nations. They said that the European Union believed that a solution accepted by all concerned must be reached as soon as possible in order to spare the civilian population more suffering.

The letter expressed the hope that the Co-Chairmen, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen, would continue to offer their valuable services in their endeavours to implement their mandate.

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